



CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

**POLICY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

December 14, 2006

10:00 A.M.

Voting Members

Representing

Present

Russ Abolt	Chatham County	
Michael Brown	City of Savannah	X
Jason Buelterman	City of Tybee Island	
LTC Carl Coffman	Hunter Army Airfield	X
Patrick S. Graham	Savannah Airport Commission	
William W. Hubbard	Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce	
James Hungerpillar	Town of Vernonburg	
McArthur Jarrett	Chairman, ACAT	X
Otis Johnson	City of Savannah	
Glenn Jones	City of Port Wentworth	
Mike Lamb	City of Pooler	
Pete Liakakis	Chairman Chatham County Commission	X
Harold Linnenkohl	GDOT	
Stephen R. Lufburrow	Chairman, MPC	
Doug J. Marchand	Georgia Ports Authority	
Clint Murphy	Chairman, CAC	X
Carl Palmer	Chatham Area Transit Authority	X
Andy Quinney	City of Garden City	
Representative	CAT Board of Directors	
Anna Maria Thomas	Town of Thunderbolt	
Wayne Tipton	City of Bloomingdale	
Eric R. Winger	Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA)	X

Voting Member Alternates

Representing

Present

George Fidler	Savannah Airport Commission	X
Shirley Sessions	City of Tybee Island	X
Radney Simpson	GDOT	X

<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Elizabeth Austin	CDS	X
Melissa Bates	CSD	X
Allan Black, P.E.	Chatham County	X
Chris Blaine	Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods	X
Betty Carter	GDOT-Jesup	X
Connie Coleman	CSD	X
Dave Cox	GDOT Planning	X
SuSu Cox	Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods	X
Isiah B.Ellison Sr.	128 Hampstead Avenue	X
Danny Filson	Fairway Oaks Neighborhood Association	X
Lawrence Garvin	120 Hampstead Avenue	X
Marianne Heimes	Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods	X
Al Hitt	263 E. DeRenne Avenue	X
Latoya Jones	FHWA	X
Sammie Kenty		X
Andrew King	Citizen	X
Beth Kinstler	Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods	X
Jack Knops	Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods	X
Lester Lamhut	Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Constance Morgan	MPC Staff	X
Sylvia Summons	CSD	X
Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP	MPC Executive Director	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO Staff	X
Mike Weiner, P.E.	City of Savannah	X
Robert Wilder	Garden City	X
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP	MPO Staff	X
Ardis Wood	Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods	X

Call to Order

Mr. Pete Liakakis called the December 14, 2006 Policy Committee Meeting to order.

I. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Radney Simpson **moved** to approve the December 14, 2006 Policy Committee Meeting Agenda as presented. Mr. Clint Murphy seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve the agenda as presented carried with none opposed.

II. Committee Reports

A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Mr. McArthur Jarrett, Chairman of the ACAT Committee, reported that at the December 8, 2006 Meeting the ACAT Committee endorsed the action items. The items endorsed were: 1) the CUTS 2007 Meeting Calendar, and 2) the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Budget Amendment to fund a Transportation Coordinator function.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Clint Murphy, CAC Chairman, reported the Citizens Advisory Committee met and approved the CUTS 2007 Meeting Calendar, and the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Budget Amendment to fund a Transportation Coordinator function. He also reported that the CAC Committee voted to request the State Department of Transportation to extend the comment period and to urge that the state study the tying in of Truman Parkway with access to I-95. He stated that a letter will be forthcoming from the Citizens Advisory Committee to the appropriate people at the DOT.

C. Technical Coordinating Committee

Mr. Thomson gave a quick view of slide pictures taken during the statewide MPO Conference that was held here in Savannah. He stated that the pictures and the conference material are available on the MPC website. He reported that the TCC endorsed action items as follows 1) the CUTS 2007 Meeting Calendar and the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Budget Amendment to fund a Transportation Coordinator function. The draft letter regarding the Georgia Congressional Delegation on Streamlining, which is on the Policy Committee agenda today, was not part of the TCC agenda. He added an update from CAT on the Transit Development Plan was presented at the TCC meeting by Carl Palmer and his staff along with consultants and will be presented to the Policy Committee early next year for review and comments. He referred the Board Members to the information item provided in their packets regarding CAT's FY 2006 accomplishments and FY 2007 Goals. This will help to educate members on their operations.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of October 25, 2006 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. **Clint Murphy** moved for approval of the October 25, 2006 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes. Mr. Eric Winger seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion for approval of the October 25, 2006 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes carried with none opposed.

B. Approval of CUTS 2007 Meeting Calendar

Mr. Eric Winger moved for approval of the CUTS 2007 Meeting Calendar as presented. Mr. Clint Murphy seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve the CUTS 2007 Meeting Calendar carried with none opposed.

C. Approval of FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Budget Amendment to fund a Transportation Coordinator function.

Ms. Jane Love gave a status update on the **FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Budget Amendment to fund a Transportation Coordinator function**. She reported that MPO staff is requesting an amendment to the staff work program, which shows the staff's planned activities and the budget related to those activities. Staff has received a FTA Section 5303 grant for \$25,000 that was requested. The total after matching funds are added is \$31,250. The budget table has been updated.

Mr. Michael Brown moved for approval of the Budget Amendment to fund a Transportation Coordinator function. Mr. Carl Palmer seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve the FY 2007 UPWP Budget Amendment to fund a Transportation Coordinator carried with none opposed.

D. Approval of Draft letter to GDOT regarding I-95/I-16 Interchange Lighting

Ms. Wykoda Wang referred members to the draft letter in the handouts regarding the request from Chairman Liakakis to Mr. Durrence, District Engineer for GDOT. Chairman Liakakis stated that there are safety concerns here because of the lighting at I-95 / I-16 Interchange that need to be alleviated. This letter is a request to GDOT asking them to remedy these challenges.

Mr. Thomson added that the letter that has been handed out today is a revision of the original letter mailed out in the packets. He said that the fourth paragraph states the additional information added to this letter.

Mr. Eric Winger questioned the revision in the letter that stated that local governments will pay for the maintenance by agreements. He asked if there was a commitment from the City of Pooler to do their share. He also added that the appropriate local government be responsible for the operational as well as the maintenance expense and that it is added to the letter of request to GDOT.

Mr. Thomson stated that an agreement had not been reached with the City of Pooler but the former Mayor and current representative were supportive.

Mr. Clint Murphy moved that the letter to Glenn Durrence, GDOT District 5, be revised with the additional request that the appropriate local government by agreement pay for the maintenance as well as the operational expense. Mr. Carl Palmer seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: The motion to revise the letter to Mr. Glenn Durrence with the additional request that the appropriate local government by agreement pay for the maintenance as well as the operational expense carried with none opposed.

E. Approval of Draft Letter to Georgia Congressional Delegation regarding Streamlining of Environmental Process for Transportation Projects.

Mr. Thomson explained the revised draft letter written to the Georgia US Senators and to the representatives concerning the Streamlining of Environmental Process for Transportation Projects was given in the handouts. He followed with a brief PowerPoint presentation. He concluded that the draft letter to send to the Georgia Congressional Delegation requests that they take action to strengthen the streamlining provisions and shorten the overall process. He offered ideas for this process. One was to make the environmental review status of projects a subject of review in the TCC meetings and occasionally in these meetings, in order to track more closely what is happening. Another idea is for the Federal government to allow States, or other implementing agencies, to “self-certify” that their document is ready for public review. This way the Federal government and the public could review the document concurrently rather than waiting for Federal approval to go to the public. States have been managing the environmental review process long enough to know what they’re doing now.

Mr. Radney Simpson suggested adding Angela Alexander, the State Transportation Planning Administrator, to the list of those receiving a copy of the letter.

Mr. Eric Winger asked if this MPO would be more effective if it had the collaboration of other counties and MPOs who have similar problems and may join in this request. He stated if just the more populous counties would join it would carry some weight.

Mr. Brown moved to revise the draft letter to the Georgia Congressional Delegation to include Ms. Alexander and to contact the other county MPOs’ with similar problems to join in collaboration to request streamlining the environmental process for transportation projects. Mr. Eric Winger seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: The motion to revise the draft letter to the Georgia Congressional Delegation to include Ms. Alexander and to contact the other county MPO to join in collaboration to request streamlining the environmental process for transportation projects carried with none opposed.

IV. Status Reports

A. Context Sensitive Design Draft Manual presentation by MPO Staff and Walter Kulash

Mr. Mark Wilkes gave a brief update on the Context Sensitive Design Draft Manual and introduced Mr. Paul Moore and Mr. Walter Kulash of Glatting Jackson, the consultants on the project

Mr. Moore presented the draft manual and explained what went into the manual and the considerations of the consultants. He stated that the manual is intended to solve some of what the community has seen as some of the negative outcomes of the current plan development process. He gave a brief PowerPoint presentation explaining the definition of arterials, major and minor collectors, main streets, local or neighborhood streets, as well as the importance of tree form and placements, and design speed.

Mr. Kulash gave a brief presentation on the aspects that go into design. He stated that, when designing for a roadway within the context of an area, the objective is keeping the natural essence, like tree cover and design speed. He gave detailed information on this process.

Mr. Moore concluded unless there is a local champion tracking this throughout the process at the MPO, at the DOT or at the city or county, from planning departments to design departments, you tend to have a loss of communication. If sidewalks or canopy trees are wanted this has to be done in the early discussion, when design speed is chosen. This local champion can be an existing staff person or a new person. He or she can be at the MPC, the City, or the County. This person will keep track of these issues for the city and county and to keep the best interest of the community in mind and make sure they are following it through the process. He stated he feels that this will be imperative if we want these things to be implemented. He also added he would love to have feed back on the draft manual and would like to hear about the things that like will help make these things more implementable or the things that are in the manual that may not be appropriate for the city or county.

Mr. Winger asked if the manual was presenting generic concepts with examples from around the country or if the manual was tailored to Savannah's unique needs.

Mr. Thomson pointed out the three case studies in the manual; President Street, Victory Drive and DeRenne Avenue. At the July CSD workshop, one exercise was about a Context Sensitive Design approach in the corridor. Regarding the discussions underway for East President Street, he stated we're not just waiting for this to happen to begin implementing the concept; we're doing it with the knowledge that we have at this point. The consultants have also included in the manual the information obtained in stakeholder interviews.

Chairman Liakakis asked consultants if they were specifically addressing DeRenne Avenue in the manual or just the concept of how some of the congestion that we have on some of our streets can be alleviated.

Mr. Moore replied there is a description of the case study on DeRenne in the manual but it was more of an illustration of the principle and the process of how to go about this. However, those three case studies are covered specifically in the manual because this was something done as part of the process of putting it together. It is however not something to be construed at this point as a recommendation for the final solution. What we are offering in the manual is a set of tools, a set of processes, and types of forums for digging into the problems and the solutions.

Speaking on the Issue

Ms. Beth Kinstler, founding member of Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods, stated she has been involved with the Context Sensitive Design since the summer and the reworking of the DeRenne Corridor. She thanked consultants for a job she believes to be well done and stated she sees a glimmer of hope on the horizon. She stated that: 1) the RFP needs to be put on hold for the DeRenne and for Hampstead as promised by the City and the County; 2) the RFP for Skidaway needs to be put on hold until further work can be done; 3) there needs to be fiscal responsibility for the monies being used instead of pouring it into road widening when there are other alternatives available; 4) the hospital (Memorial Health) has promised a transportation "czar" back in the spring when several PSN members spoke with Bob Colvin, and we want to know why nothing has happened; 5) Mildred St. should be reopened; and 6) the City should give Glatting Jackson the opportunity to present a better idea for the DeRenne Corridor.

Mr. Jack Knops, Citizens Advisory Committee, stated that in view of the key phrases regarding early and continuous public involvement, as highlighted in Mr. Thomson's memo on environmental streamlining, he requests the following: 1) that an alternative proposal be requested from the firm of Glatting Jackson, from the perspective on Context Sensitive Design, for both the DeRenne Six Lane Widening and the Hampstead Connector; 2) that the CAC be asked to comment on the two proposals and that those comments be forwarded to the City Council Members

Ms. Ardis Wood, citizen, hopes that the consultants can be available when we get to a point where we may have some difficulty. These folks are well versed in all the solutions for road difficulties and should be on call when we have difficulties. She stated she also hopes that we can work with the city's

largest employers, the malls and the hospitals, and acquire land as a partnership with the city and the county and these entities so that we can institute a park and ride for those few times when our roads are busy as we have seen in the chart.

Ms. SuSu Cox, Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods, stated she does not support the widening of DeRenne or tunneling under DeRenne. She expressed extreme appreciation to MPC Staff for the hiring of Glatting Jackson and bringing to the community a new way of thinking on Transportation. She requested: 1) delay any decision making on the widening of DeRenne and the Hampstead Connector until Glatting Jackson can take a good look at these issues that are on the table; 2) that progress be made on the ambulance signal pre-emption device that was well-supported in Connecting Savannah; 3) that Connecting Savannah participants reconvene and have the opportunity to meet with Glatting Jackson.

Ms. Melissa Bates, Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods, said she agreed with the previous speakers and asked what “programmed” meant regarding the Hampstead Engineering study.. She also asked if the FY 2007-2009 was the time frame of the study. Mr. Thomson answered that programmed meant that it was scheduled to go to the next step, that there is funding available for it, and that is the time frame. Her final question was if the environmental process that was spoken of was included in the engineering study. Mr. Thomson answered yes.

Mr. Thomson stated he understood the popularity of Glatting Jackson, but there was a process in requesting proposals that allowed all engineering firms to submit a proposal for the next steps to these projects. He explained the steps of the project. The six-laning of DeRenne is a place-holder in our plan. He urged Board Members to move forward with the RFPs’ ensuring that the CSD component is well established in the process. He recommended that the concept is refined with the needs of the community and that the design that is created is appropriate for Savannah.

Mr. Palmer asked if the scope in the RFP for DeRenne had included sufficient references to CSD-style solutions to bring us the consultant team that has expertise in going forward with this. Mr. Thomson answered that he would have to look again at the scope from last year, but he believes so. Also, scopes usually are revised after selection of a firm in order to maximize

the capabilities of that firm. The consultant that the review team interviewed brought CSD solutions to the table. Mr. Thomson said he is comfortable with the staff recommendation on selection.

Mr. Mel Cook, citizen, asked questions regarding the DeRenne and the Hampstead projects. He asked if the monies had been appropriated for the Hampstead and will go forward and be completed in a couple of years. Mr. Thomson repeated that the money had been programmed, and the voters had approved spending for east-west improvements in the SPLOST, but that actual appropriation of the money will require approval by County Commission and acceptance by City Council. Mr. Cook stated the money should be directed towards other worthwhile projects that need to be completed in the City and not toward Hampstead. He stated Savannah should mirror the city of Jacksonville and finish Truman Parkway over the marshes. He stated more consideration should also be given to Hunter Army Airfield. He added concerns regarding how much money will be spent in the next 20-30 years on projects that will ultimately go to waste.

Ms. Marianne Heimes, citizen, stated traffic is a problem everywhere, not just in Savannah, but the consultants here have offered some great ideas for consideration to the problems here in Savannah. She asked that Board Members slow down and take another look at the manual that has been presented and not rush into six laning and not hand out an RFP that does not include CSD.

Mr. Chris Blain, stakeholder on Hampstead project, asked that the Board Members use their role in leadership on CUTS and to become more sensitive to what the citizens of Savannah are asking for.

Mr. Michael Brown stated he feels the consultants have done a very good job of articulating CSD. It is reflective of what we have done in parts of Savannah and he feels it should be incorporated in the decision making. He stated there should be context sensitive decision making and it should include Hunter Army Airfield. His recommendations were as follows: a) adopt the Context Sensitive Design principles; b) devise some kind of Context Sensitive decision making process; c) community education and d) the award of an RFP to incorporate these ideas moving forward at some point in 2007. He concluded that the City of Savannah is taking the lead with the ambulance signal pre-emption project. This project involves two hospitals, a local EMS service provider, and about ten counties that send ambulances into DeRenne. This is out for bids now, but it's a complicated decision.

Mr. Brown moved to approve the following requests; a) adopt the Context Sensitive Design principles; b) devise some kind of Context Sensitive decision making process; c) educate the community and d) award an RFP to incorporate these ideas at some point in 2007. Mr. Winger seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: The motion to approve the following request: a) adopt the Context Sensitive Design principles; b) devise some kind of Context Sensitive decision making process; c) educate the community; and d) award an RFP to incorporate these ideas at some point in 2007 carried with none opposed.

Speaking on the Issue: Ms. Judith Grissett, Accountant, stated public officials informed her at the voting for SPLOST meeting that the DeRenne widening was going to be delayed because they were worried that everyone was going to vote against SPLOST if they thought this project was in it. She stated when the public is voting on SPLOST they are not in agreement with each and every project. Because the money has been appropriated doesn't mean that you must continue with that project when there is so much opposition to it.

Ms. Katherine Cook, native Savannahian, voiced concerns over the Hampstead Connector and the importance of Hunter Army Airfield. She stated she was in opposition to the Hampstead Connector, believing it will be ineffective.

V. Agency Reports

A. Georgia Department of Transportation

Ms. Betty Carter referred the Committee members to the handout showing the status of projects. Concerning the recent news of a funding shortfall at GDOT, Chairman Liakakis questioned Ms. Carter on the availability of funds for projects that have been previously approved. Ms. Carter said she would take questions back to GDOT and would be forthcoming with the answers.

B. Chatham County

Mr. Allan Black gave a brief report on the status of the Chatham County projects. He stated progress is being made on the Truman Parkway, both in terms of finalizing plans and acquiring the ROW and will likely be ready to start early 2008.

Mr. Clint Murphy questioned whether or not the bike lane that's being built on the Truman Linear Park is ongoing.

Mr. Black replied it has an earmark under the new federal law and will proceed.

C. City of Savannah

Mr. Mike Weiner gave an update on the status of the DeRenne Avenue Ambulance Signal Pre-emption system. There are two proposals that have been submitted. Each proposal is different from the other on how they pre-empt the signal. Each company will present a full demo to show how the devices are implemented. The City will make a selection on which company better addresses the problem on DeRenne Avenue. He then highlighted other projects: 1)the Henry and Anderson project has been completed and the contractor is going through the punch list issues that have not been addressed properly; 2)the City is presently buying the ROW for Gwinnett Avenue curb reconstruction and we should be able to move very shortly getting this project under construction; 3) we are still working on the environmental process for the Gwinnett Street widening project; 4) on the LaRoche widening a consultant has been contracted to develop another concept; and 5) a public information meeting was held last month on E. Anderson curb reconstruction, and the City is presently addressing the citizen concerns discussed at that meeting

D. Chatham Area Transit Authority

Mr. Carl Palmer briefly highlighted on the status of Transit Center site selection. He stated the CAT Board has authorized staff to move forward on two sites as the two preferred alternatives: the old Greyhound Bus Station and Louisville Road near MLK Blvd. Consultants are preparing a site selection report to submit to the Federal Transit Administration. The Environment Assessment will be submitted at the first of the year. He added the Transportation Development Plan is expected to be completed in April. The preliminary findings will be presented to the Policy Committee in February. Also, CAT is working with Laidlaw, the contractor for Teleride service, to upgrade its scheduling software systems. This will allow more accurate and efficient scheduling of Teleride trips.

E. Georgia Ports Authority

There was no report at this time

F. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport

Mr. George Fidler gave an updated status report on the projects on the Savannah-Hilton Head Airport. Planning continues for the Connector Road to support Gulfstream's new facility. Terminal expansion is also scheduled for completion in May, 2007; the parking deck is scheduled for completion in July, 2007 but won't open until September. The contractors will begin installation of the signal poles at Airways Avenue and I-95 after January 3, 2007.

VI. Adjournment

There being no other Business to come before the Committee the December 14, 2006 Policy Committee was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

Mark Wilkes, P. E., AICP
Director of Transportation Planning